SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

DEATH AMONG THE VETERANS.

From the N. Y. Times.

Death seems to be busy with the veterans in this changeful autumn weather. Last Tuesday the old Admiral was put to his rest in the city of his birth. While the muffled drums were beating the "long-rolling salute, as they were went to do," our reporter tells us, "whenever the gallant old seaman stepped upon his quarter deck," the oldest soldier of our wars was dying at his home in Troy. The soldier of more than a half century's campaigns has gone to join the sailor whose career began under the shadow of the Revolution. Together they warred upon England; together they served their flag with unblemished honor and devotion for more than the space of ordinary lives, and the memories that cluster around them as they go to another world embody much that we have of glory in our military and naval history.

And over the sea comes the tidings that an American had passed away so honored by the English nation that his statue has been erected in the heart of its capital, and the English Queen has directed his remains to rest in the royal sepulchre of Westminster Abbey. Our countryman was a mere merchant, but so beautiful and earnest was his life, so full of kindness and brotherly sympathy, so generous and all-embracing in charity, that kingly honors fall upon him justly, and men say this simple citizen lived so princely a life that his dust is worthy to rest in the tomb of kings. How weak and fragile these gossamer barriers that separate English and American kinship as we stand over the grave of George Peabody! "It was his wish," said Mr. Gladstone, "to die in England and be buried in America." In the presence of this noble sentiment, how foolish and criminal all political bitterness, boundary lines and Alabama claims, and menaces of war between two branches of our race! How much more heartiness and philanthropy and patriotism in the dying man's entreaty!

There are rumors of death from royal chambers. The French Emperor, we are told in hint and suggestion, is dying from a cruel disease, and the priests still hover over the excommunicated King Victor with the sacred oil and the emblem of the Redeemer's broken body. Those whimsical theologians, whose prophecies are as exact as geometry, who are constantly seeing the opening of the Seventh Seal and the coming of the millennial time, would find in this conjunction strange fulfillments. "The King of Italy dying, the Emperor doomed, and all the gorgeous priests and deacons of Catholicism assembled to proclaim the infallibility of the Pope;—what a manifestation—what a realization of the downfall of antichrist and the final overthrew of the scarlet women and the wicked power of Babylon." He would be a wise prophet who could see the end of this—for the time has passed when the deaths of monarchs are merely dynastic transitions. Impatient France and disappointed Italy wait at these royal chambers—one mourning for liberty murdered in a night, the other for a liberty which has been degraded into license, chaos, disorder, national humiliation. Whether these rulers live or die at this time, the age has swept beyond them, and the spirit of freedom walks abroad. We shall have an Italy without a camp of bandits in her capital, covered by the protecting robes of the Church. We shall have a France whose chief city is not merely the barricade of a usurpation and a tyranny.

Amos Kendall died on Friday at his country house in the District of Columbia. Occasionally we have seen Amos Kendall in these latter days, but with much wonderment on the part of our young men. His last public appearance was when he tottered up the aisle at the great Chicago-McClellan Convention, amid the cheers of Vallandigham and his Rebel allies. Men who knew Amos Kendall—what he had done, and the part he played in the days when Jackson crushed nullification—felt as though in such an assembly he must have recalled the words of Lear:—

"You do me wrong
To take me out of the grave."

Yet there was a time when this man's influence was like the silent, subtle electricity, which exercises unimaginable dominion over the world of nature. He was the power behind the throne of the irascible, warm-minded, patriotic Jackson—a secret, hidden power, which disdained honor, office, and ostentation, and was great and feared because of its mystery. He passed from public life with his chief, like most of those who served him. It is a singular commentary upon those who deny great ability to Jackson, and who are wont to regard the triumphs of his administration as the achievements of abler men, that when he left the scene the "great men" who "made him" faded into obscurity or helplessness. Blair, Van Buren, Taney, Livingston, Benton—all were nothing but his secretaries and rhetoricians and orators—the expression of a power made uncouth and sometimes tyrannical, but still a power that had Titanic godlike fire, and without which his instruments were dead fragments of political machinery. With him they were great, without him they were weak. Since Jackson passed away Kendall has been living in comfort and retirement, given to telegraph and ecclesiastical enterprises. He leaves behind him a tradition. His death recalls the stormy days of Whig and Democrat, bank and anti-bank, nullification and tariffs, and brings again to the sight of men the strange, gaunt, commanding figure of the lusty Tennessean who ruled his country like a king, and whose influence is still felt in our political history.

Of the same school—rather younger in experiences and greater than Mr. Kendall by reason of a genius of his own, and capable of direct personal expression—was Robert J. Walker, who died on Thursday morning. Governor Walker was a remarkable illustration of what great ability and family association may accomplish. We have no aristocracy, but we often see how easy is the path of power to men who have relations by marriage and kin with successful statesmen and politicians. Originally a shrewd, patient, plodding, rather pedantic Pennsylvania lawyer, he found himself buoyed along in his career by the advantage of political experience in a Southern State and connection by marriage and blood with the old families of Pennsylvania—families like those of Dallas, and Franklin, and Bache, and Duane. Walker's great success was as a theoretical Secretary of the Treasury. He studied finances as he did his books. Hamilton was a man of creative genius, Chase of expedients, Walker of theories. So he was a good Secretary—a reasonably good Senator—an honest Governor. He was too much of a politician to be a really great lawyer, and too great a lawyer to be a successful politician. His Northern birth and associations, and his Southern political experiences kept him always on a see-saw. His convictions and his pride took him with Douglas. Fort Sumter drove him into the Union party, and there he remained like Reverdy Johnson, acquiescent but not enthusiastic, always on the verge, ready to tip over at every advance towards progress and liberalism, finally tipping gladly and with the sense of going home, when Mr. Andrew Johnson made an issue which Northern Democrats could accept without disloyalty. Walker was never a party man long enough to be trusted, and after circling around many honors and dignities, he lapsed back to his law books. Now that he has left us, we prefer to think of him as in his Kansas days. Then we saw the man, and it is something to remember, as we look at a career really so barren considering his opportunities, that in a time of trial he showed courage and conscience.

The appointed hour must come to all of us, and yet it is not without a feeling of sadness that we see these forms of historical significance sink into eternal silence. So do we see the towering tree, whose branches have stood the storms of many years, finally yield to the crumbling, withering touch of Time. It is something to die as Lincoln and Sedgwick, in the flush of labor, and opportunity, and duty. There is glory in it, even ecstacy, such as the true warrior must feel when he dies amid the thunder of war. But men like Stewart, and Wool, and Peabody, and Kendall, and Walker live two lives—a life of action and a life of contemplation. But for St. Helena we should not know Napoleon. Had he died at Waterloo his life would have been to future ages a vague and dazzling dream. Six years of thought enabled him to speak as well as act—and the words he spoke to Las Casas and Bertsand and Montholon did as much for a true estimate of his fame as the most brilliant achievements of his life. The great man retires into his library or his gardens, and looks upon himself in history—how he walked and labored—where he failed, and where he triumphed—where he was weak and where he was strong. This completes and rounds the career. Taking this view, it is probably a vain and useless compliance with custom to weep over those who die as these men died. Rather should we rejoice at their blessed privilege, for to them years of action have been followed by years of reflection, of counsel to the unwary, and encouragement to the young who enter upon life with timid and faltering steps. To them it was not only permitted to live, but to teach others how to live.

CACKLING OF THE GEESE.

From the N. Y. World.

The old story that Rome was saved from destruction by outside barbarians in consequence of the timely warning uttered by the bird which, up to that time, was not generally supposed to be the emblem of wisdom, has had recently a fresh illustration in our own times. The sapient body which styles itself the Chamber of Commerce, on whose decisions so much of our commercial prosperity depends, fearing lest the total disappearance of the interest which it is popularly supposed to represent may cause it to become to the ordinary apprehension what for a long time it has been really—not a name only, but the very shadow of one—came together in solemn conclave and decided there and then that something must be done to revivify our shattered commerce, and to prevent the Chamber of Commerce itself from finding its serious occupation wholly gone. The free-traders—those terrible agitators who have been making so much noise of late—are teaching the pernicious doctrine that, in order to place the American ship-owner on an equality with the Englishman, German, and Frenchman, so far as the carrying trade is concerned, the purchase of vessels in the cheapest market and then free admission to American registry must be conceded. The Chamber of Commerce, anxious to save the country from the ruin which would be brought upon it by the free-traders—who in this case represent the Goths, Vandals, slaves of British gold, agents of a "disloyal" press, or whatever the case may be—have cackled loudly that such a step, which at first blush seems one of the simplest justice, must never be allowed, but that the true remedy lies in a little more of Dr. Sangrado's practice—a trifle more or less, it makes no difference, of blood-letting and hot water. Pacific railroads have been encouraged; why not Pacific lines? Vast sums have been spent to benefit private interests; why not call on Congress to do a little more business of this kind, in order to make the owners of a few steamship lines happy and comfortable, and to cause the country to thrill with delight at the thought of the Star-Spangled Banner floating from the mast-head of vessels of American build, and the Englishman and Frenchman and German gnawing their vitals with mingled feelings of jealousy and rage?

We have every respect for the members who compose the Chamber of Commerce; but, seriously speaking, is it not humiliating that an association which is presumed to keep the question of commerce under the most careful consideration should have no other remedy to suggest for the re-establishment of this prostrate industry than the granting of subsidies—the putting of private hands into the already depleted public pocket—which is merely an attempt to make atonement for an existing form of injustice by the creation of a new one?

Instead of attacking the tariff which has "protected" the American ship-builders out of existence and the American ship-owner into a watery grave: instead of pointing to the unjust and oppressive laws which discriminate against our own citizens and actually favor the foreigner, the Chamber of Commerce declaims about "grants" and wails over a "disloyal" and "anti-American" press, and affirms that, if any movement is made in the direction of subsidies, there is always opposition to it. Of course there is. It is the duty of the press to raise its voice against any wasteful expenditure of the people's money; and the subsidizing of particular lines of vessels is no less a wrong than is the legislation which has destroyed the lines which previously existed.

We desire to point out to these gentlemen, and to those who have our commercial interests at heart, that there is but one legitimate way of restoring our commerce and of recovering a share of the carrying trade between this country and foreign ports, and that is a modification of the tariff to a revenue basis and absolute freedom of trade in the purchase of ships. To resort to subsidies would only add to the ruinous competition to which American shipowners are already subjected; and, as the subsidies which it is proposed to pay must be taken out of the pockets of the people, the net result would be that we should tax the whole country, with the effect of making our unfortunate shipping interest worse off than ever.

THE CURRENCY QUESTION AND CONGRESS.

From the N. Y. Herald.

In view of the movements in the West and South, and the probable pressure that will be made upon Congress to increase the currency in these sections of the country, the question naturally arises what can be done in the matter, and what, probably, will be the action of Congress? Then, again, is this an underhand movement of the national banks to increase the volume of their circulation and power, and with a view to push out of existence ultimately the legal tender currency? No doubt there is an unequal distribution of national banks and banking facilities in the different sections of the country. The East has far more than its due proportion, the West has not relatively as many as it ought to have, and the South has comparatively very few. The distribution at first, when the national banks went into operation, was not proportionate, because the Eastern and Northern capitalists and politicians had power enough in Congress and over the Government to secure the largest share. But the disproportion has become far greater since, through the progress of the West and through the restoration and development of the South. There is, then, a necessity for the readjustment of banks and banking facilities throughout the country. How is this to be done? Shall the number of banks be increased and the national bank currency expanded proportionately? Or shall the number of these institutions be reduced in the East and North and the same number be given to the West and South?

There is no necessity, however, for increasing the total amount of national bank currency. An equitable distribution of this should be made, so far as the nominal possession or circulation of it by the banks goes, and, if necessary, the whole number of banking institutions may be increased, provided a portion of currency be taken from existing banks for the new ones that may be organized. But this, if we mistake not, is not what the agitators for more currency and the national bank monopolists are aiming at. It is an adroit scheme, probably, to increase the total of the national bank circulation, with the view of superseding ultimately the greenback or legal tender currency. Of course this object will not be avowed by many for fear of alarming the public at the grasping tendency and enormous power of the national banks. But if the banks should succeed in enlarging the volume of their circulation they would soon after raise the cry of a redundant currency, in order to force a contraction or total withdrawal of the legal tenders. They would rally to their aid all the on-to-specie-payment theorists, and with these would make a combined movement to drive the greenbacks out of existence, under the specious pretext of returning to specie payments. Not that the national banks want specie payments or expect to return to them. They simply want the entire national circulation, the control of all the money in the country, the enormous profits of forty or fifty millions a year on their currency, and the vast power all this would give them over the Government, policies, and material interests of the republic. That is what this gigantic and dangerous monopoly is aiming at. It will have, undoubtedly, a powerful influence in Congress, for two-thirds of the members, probably, are interested directly or indirectly in the national banking institutions. There is the greatest necessity, therefore, that public opinion should be aroused to the threatened evil. The people should demand that the legal-tender currency be not reduced and that the circulation and power of the national banks be not increased. Indeed, the national bank currency ought to be withdrawn and greenbacks issued in its place. The West and South, as well as the East and North, might have then as many banks as they chose—that is, banks of deposit and loans, and for commercial accommodation, which is the only legitimate business of banking, all using at the same time the currency of the Government and people for circulation. The Government would then get the benefit of a national circulation the profits of which are enormous; the people would have a uniform currency, perfectly safe and steady, and a monstrous and dangerous monopoly would be shorn of its power. If the currency is to be disturbed or changed at all this is the only rational view to take of the matter—the only view in accordance with sound financial doctrine and the public interests.